

Director's Monthly Message: Janel L. Forde



With the late-October arrival this year of wintry winds and even some snow usually reserved for November in the Midwest, our thoughts of November may include a certain dread of inclement weather to come. But our hearts in this month tend to focus on two significant celebrations of our lives –

starting with the annual opportunity to recognize, appreciate, and sincerely thank our nation's military veterans, past and present, as their selfless service and commitment is honored on **Veterans Day, November 11.**

We are proud in this November Newsletter to list and honor, specifically, military veterans from all branches of the Armed Forces, who also happen to work for CMS, and who volunteered their names and service information when we asked permission to publicly name and recognize them. For those who preferred no formal recognition, we also honor and appreciate your service and sacrifices.

We are fortunate to have this core of talent and commitment at the heart of our CMS service staff, complete with the leadership skills and enthusiasm for the work that often go hand in hand with the military experience. We urge all our employees to take time as we relax and enjoy the November 11th holiday to reflect deeply on the importance of a professional military to our lives in America.

And, as we express our appreciation for those blessings of security and valor, we bring to mind the other November event of great importance, the Thanksgiving holiday itself – our annual opportunity to join with family and friends in our thankfulness for all the blessings and

grace many millions of Americans from various walks of life are fortunate to enjoy.

An additional, very tangible way of expressing that thankfulness also is available to CMS staff and all State employees in November – the annual **State and University Employee Combined Appeal (SECA)** charitable campaign, which wraps up on **November 20th.** SECA encourages employees of CMS and scores of other State agencies, representing tens of thousands of workers, to make a unified and powerful impact in lifting up hundreds of deserving not-for-profit service providers working throughout Illinois on our behalf. It is right for us to do this, and the willingness of so many employees to give as much as they can to help others makes us all proud and thankful for that shared spirit of generosity.

Our collective freedoms and prosperity are easy to take for granted if our mindfulness is lacking or we concentrate too much on negatives we hear in the daily news. By expressing thanks as one in many ways, we share our strength and vision, and we celebrate one another for all the right reasons.

We at CMS are thankful for the veterans who work every day, with little fanfare, to serve the nation and protect our freedoms. We are thankful for the support of taxpayers and local partners providing funds, manpower, or other resources to make vital service programs available to all who need assistance.

And, of course, we are extremely thankful for our CMS staff and all other State employees who work hard every day to provide services and support to residents and agencies throughout the State of Illinois. Thanks to your ongoing commitment, CMS finds itself positioned, perhaps better than in many years, to take full advantage of the opportunities coming in the year ahead.



Honoring CMS Veterans

Here in CMS, we have the privilege to work alongside so many who chose to serve our state and our country. We thank them for their service, their commitment, and their bravery.

Jason Alvis

Air Force

Kevin Behl

Air Force

Josh Bohms

Marine Corps

Rewa Boldrey

Air Force

Chris Bond

Army

Cynthia Brune

Air Force

Justin Buchanan

Army

Aaron Burlingham

Air Force

Brandon Buser

Air Force

David R. Chaudoin

Air Force

Erik Colon

Navy

Amber Cornell

Army

Kellie Cravens

Air Force

Vicki Davis

Air National Guard

Marcus Dennis

Army

Brian Elam

Navy

Matt Emigholz

Marine Corps

Tamiko Epting

Army

Brent Fisher

Marine Corps

James Fox

Army

Tim Franke

Air Force/
Illinois Air National Guard

Ben Garbacz

Army

Jay Gomer

Army

Eric Halberg

Air Force

Wilbert Harden

Army

Aaron Hardin

Army

Matt Harman

Marine Corps

Elizabeth N. Helton

Air National Guard

Dru Hise

Air Force

Anne Hofferkamp

Illinois Air National Guard

Daniel Horn

Army

Elizabeth Hynek

Illinois Air National Guard

Herbert Johnson

Navy

Eddie Kimble

Army

Samuel Kinkelaar

Army National Guard

Mary Beth Kinser

Air Force

Brett Lindsey

Air Force

Diana McGrath

Army

Jeffrey Meier

Air Force

Chris Newman

Navy

Diane Oates

Air Force

Paul Olshefsky

Army

Shawn Perron

Marine Corps

Keith Pigg

Marine Corps

Ross Pollina

Marine Corps

Michelle Pugh

Army/National Guard

Harry Reinhard

Army

James R. Sampson

Navy

Travis Shellenbarger

Marine Corps

Ross Shepard

Air National Guard

Akeem Shittu

Army

Jeffrey Sisson

Air Force

Beth Skeeters

Air Force/
Illinois Air National Guard

Fred V. Stewart, II

Air Force

Michael Talkington

Navy

Christine Teer

Air Force

Erin L. Thorson

Air Force

Stephen Tucker

Coast Guard Reserve/
Army National Guard

Bart Welker

Air Force

Tom Whitehead

Army

Ron Wilson

Army

Michael Wright

Marine Corps



Team of the Month



The CMS Employee (Team) of the Month for November, in front of a circa-1940s Illinois State Highway Truck on display at the Harry S. Hanley Building, Springfield, where more than 35 members of the CMS building maintenance team are headquartered. From left, Vince Veseling, Facility Manager; Brian Saxer, Chief Engineer; Dave Sekardi, Electrician; Steve Nowack, Electrician; and Todd Knoles, Laborer. Team member not pictured: Brian Mulcahy, Carpenter.

The CMS Employee of the Month for November turns out to be a Team of the Month – an experienced group that exemplifies what may be a trending attitude in CMS toward better teamwork and communications. Six members of the **Bureau of Property Management's** building maintenance staff were awarded the Team of the Month honors for a three-day turnaround and economical safety overhaul to a dilapidated IDOT fuel station in Springfield.

The November recognition features CMS Electricians **Dave Sekardi** and **Steve Nowack**, CMS Laborer **Todd Knoles**, and CMS Carpenter **Brian Mulcahy**, along with the team's supervisor, Chief Engineer **Brian Saxer**, and **Vince Veseling**, CMS Facility Manager, who oversees the full staff of 45 CMS building maintenance professionals, most of whom are headquartered at IDOT's Harry S. Hanley Building.

The decades-old fuel station at the IDOT Lincoln Avenue maintenance yard serves IDOT vehicles, including trucks, plows, and other equipment. By the time a work order came through, the site was more than just an eyesore. "When they gave us the work order on the fuel station, all they were asking for was a roof repair," said Sekardi, a 12-year veteran at CMS. "When we went out to determine the feasibility and what might be needed, we saw a dilapidated fuel station that needed a lot more than just a new roof. That wouldn't have even begun to solve the problems," which included general weathering and moisture infiltration due to the bad roof, but also featured significant deterioration inside and out, along with years of mold build-up and the effects of rodent infestation.

The teamwork on the fuel station replacement was typical of how the group works together on every project to try to save unnecessary costs and move quickly to save time. "Everybody kind of throws in and we work together to try to figure out the best solutions, and it's really nice to be allowed to do that," said Nowack, who has been with CMS for more than 3 years. Rather than focusing on roof repairs for a deteriorated building, the team immediately realized replacing the structure with a weather-tight, modern fuel depot would be less costly, more effective, and a much better use of tax dollars. And the team went to work on utilizing partnerships to ensure affordable, good work.

The new design would replace the station with a smaller, modern, weather-tight fire cabinet, updated electrical connections and fueling equipment, and much improved safety and reliability. The team enlisted the help of the **State Fire Marshal's Office** to validate its replacement plan in advance, and to offer suggestions. A longtime State equipment supplier chipped in with a steep discount on parts and equipment needed for the fix. With all that help in place, the labor team accomplished the job in about three days.

The cost to the State overall for parts and labor totaled about \$2,000, and Veseling estimated an outside contract for the same work at no less than \$10,000, reflecting a cost savings of at least 80 percent. The time involved also was reduced from what might have been a multi-month procurement process to only about three weeks from work order to finished project.

Team of the Month Continued

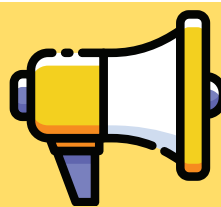
“The State has several advantages when we can do these things in-house using our own teams,” Sekardi said. “Usually we can figure out how to get things done at less cost and in a lot less time” than the months of time and significant funds typically required to bid, execute, and implement an outside contract.

“The main thing is to objectively look at the long-term cost of repair versus replacement,” said Knoles, a 19-year CMS employee with 26 years in State experience overall. “Sometimes it just makes more sense to do a complete fix, especially when our team can do the work ourselves.”

“We really appreciate each other’s skills and ideas, and the fact that we can always count on each other to do our best,” Sekardi said, as Nowack and Knoles nodded in unison. “Whenever we can accomplish something that saves time and money, it really makes us feel good.” Veseling and Saxer both expressed their pride in the team, but both made clear that this is not the exception

in CMS building maintenance, but a common experience and expectation among the entire CMS building maintenance staff.

“These guys here form a winning team, and they did a fantastic job conceiving and delivering the fuel station overhaul,” Veseling said. “But the really nice thing is that they aren’t the only ones doing a great job on our staff. We try to give credit and recognition wherever it’s due, but we’re lucky to have numerous winning teams on our maintenance staff here in Springfield, coming up with great service stories daily – and I mean daily. This project was just one example of how well our teams can perform if you just let them do what they know how to do best.”



If you are interested in nominating a person or team for Employee of the Month, please go bit.ly/CMS-EOTM to make a submission.

Happening Around CMS



Disability Awareness Month

Chief Administrative Officer Mark Mahoney and **Deputy Director of Diversity and Inclusion Lisa Williams** helped coordinate the Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities (ICED) Awards Ceremony to celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The event captivated the audience at the James R. Thompson Center with a performance from Momenta and awards given to Sean Weldon, Anna D'Ascenzo, the Epilepsy Foundation of Greater Chicago, and State Representative Theresa Mah.



FMLA Training

Courtney O'Connell and **Dina Ninfo** gave a presentation as part of their Supervisor/Manager Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Training Tour to managers and supervisors from a variety of State agencies in order to ensure that leadership is aware of important rights and responsibilities associated with FMLA, along with other workplace laws.

On the TRAIL

The **Bureau of Benefits** traveled around Illinois to present on the Total Retiree Advantage Illinois (TRAIL) Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug program. **Gail Lumb, CMS' Medicare/COB Unit Manager**, presented addressed hundreds of retired Teachers, College professionals, and retirees on the benefits of this program, showing how the State of Illinois is there to support them.



Technology Supplier Diversity Day

With the State of Illinois Legislative Black & Latino Caucuses, Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology, and Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, CMS joined in hosting the Diversity Supplier Technology Day. Governor Pritzker opened the event, and **Irma Lopez, BEP Outreach Manager**, spoke about resources and opportunities for BEP vendors.



Make sure to follow CMS on **LinkedIn** to keep up with everything our agency is doing.

State and University Employees Combined Appeal

What is SECA?

SECA, the State and University Employees Combined Appeal, is the annual workplace giving campaign that allows State employees to donate to nearly 1,500 charities at local, state, national, and international levels.

This year's SECA Honorary Chair is **Lieutenant Governor Stratton**. With her support and the work of employees throughout CMS, we are showing the generosity of our agency and our state.

Thank you to CMS Ambassadors **Rewa Boldrey, Steve Booth, Carolyn Fields, Betsy Hendricks, Katrina Livingston, Anna Mason, Cynde McCluskey, and Cindy Pflug** for planning the fundraising events and their work to help CMS have a successful SECA campaign. Learn more about SECA at www.secaillinois.org.

Costume Contest

In Chicago, staff dressed up, raised money for SECA, and showed off their costumes at the **Lieutenant Governor's** Trick or Treat event. Congratulations to **Marolyn Moore** for best costume and **Elisa Martinez, Erik Colon, and Larry Olszak** for most creative costume.

The costume parade continued in Springfield with Bureau of Benefits. While having some fun and building team spirit, the participants continued to raise money for SECA following a successful bake sale they had last month.



Chili Cook-off

Thanks to all the bureaus who participated in the SECA chili cook-off. It was wonderful to gather for some good food and raise money for those in need. Congratulations to **Property Management** for first place for the chili and **Personnel** for first place for their table.



Noteworthy November Observations



National Alzheimer's Disease Month

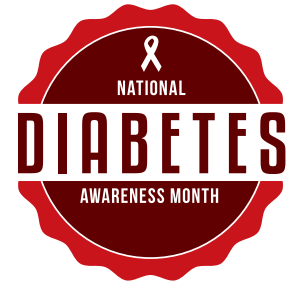
National Diabetes Month

Nov. 11: Veteran's Day

Nov. 19: Women's Entrepreneurship Day

Nov. 20: Last day of SECA

Nov. 23: Thanksgiving Day



Illinois Events

Nov. 10: Hometown Heroes Celebration

Gateway Center, 1 Gateway Dr., Collinsville

<https://www.gatewaycenter.com/event/hometown-heroes-celebration>

Nov. 10: Jingle Bell Run

Heartland Community College, 1500 W. Raab Road, Normal

<https://events.arthritis.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.event&eventID=913>

Nov. 11: State Holiday – Veteran's Day

Nov. 15 – Dec. 24: Christkindlmarket

Daley Plaza, 50 W Washington Street, Chicago

<http://www.christkindlmarket.com/chicago/>

Nov. 15 – Nov. 17: 1939 Film Fest

Legacy Theatre, 101 E Lawrence Ave., Springfield

<https://www.atthelegacy.com/>

Nov. 22: Magnificent Mile Lights Festival

Chicago

<https://www.themagnificentmile.com/lights-festival/>

Nov. 23 – Dec. 1: Festival of Trees

Illinois State Fair, 801 E Sangamon Ave., Springfield

<https://www.memorialmedical.com/memorial-medical-center-foundation/events/festival-of-trees>

Nov. 28: State Holiday – Thanksgiving Day

Nov. 30: Parade of Lights 2019

1 E Main St., Champaign

https://allevents.in/mobile/amp-event.php?event_id=200017928120607



State of Illinois
Central Management Services

CMS

Illinois Department of
Central Management Services

Office of the Acting Director
Janel L. Forde
(217) 782-2141

For more information on this newsletter or any other CMS initiatives, contact:

Lauren Krupp • Public Affairs Specialist: (312) 814-3766

Wendy Butler • Director of Governmental Affairs: (217) 785-1941